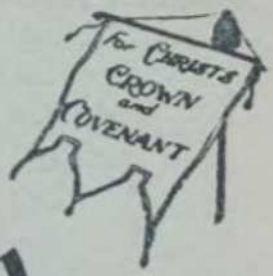
Rev. J. P. STRUTHERS CENTENARY NUMBER



Reformed Presbyterian Witness

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN BEHALF OF

Personal and Family Religion, Missionary Enterprise and the Principles of the Scottish Reformation.

Vol. LXX APRIL, 1951 No. 4

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Reformed Presbyterian Witness

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J. P. STRUTHERS CENTENARY

A Public Meeting

to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Rev. J. P. Struthers

will (D.V.) be held in the R.P. Church,
Nicholson Street, Glasgow,
on Tuesday, 10th April, at 7.30 p.m.

SPEAKERS: ***Rev. M. Guthrie Clark.***
Rev. Principal F. Davidson, D.D.

A Film Strip made up of illustrations from *The Morning Watch* will be shown by Rev. Hugh J. Blair.

Collection to defray expenses.

EXTRA COPIES of this number are being printed and can be had by sending five pence for each and postage to: JAMES IRWIN,
25 Dalkeith Avenue,
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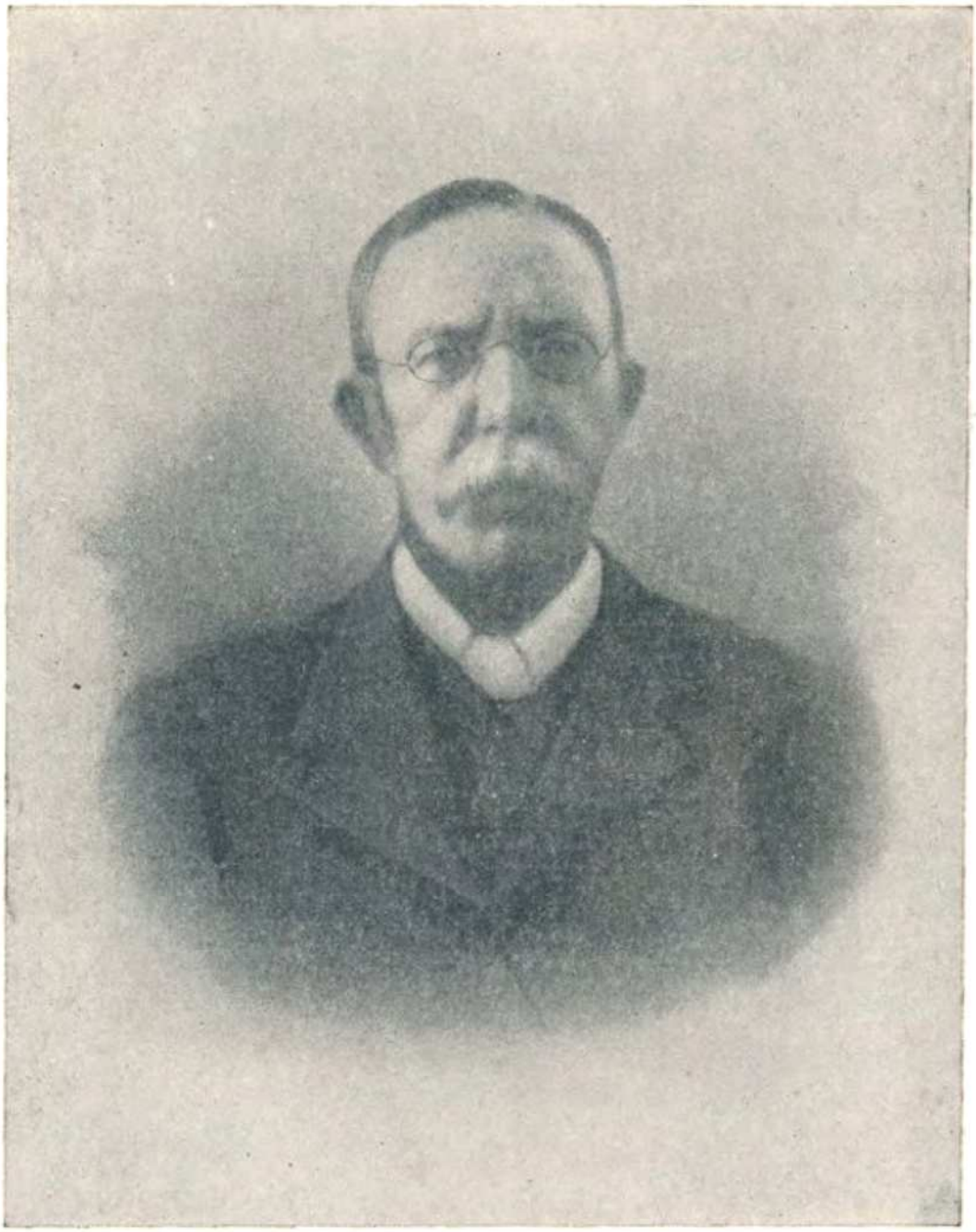

JOHN PATERSON STRUTHERS

8th April, 1851—

18th January, 1915.

:: The ::

Reformed Presbyterian Witness

"Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord."—*Isaiah.*

"The truth I speak, impugn it whoso list."—*John Knox.*

Vol. LXX APRIL, 1951 No. 4

This issue of the Reformed Presbyterian Witness *is sent forth as a humble tribute to the memory of a man who, born one hundred years ago, still exercises an incalculable influence on those who are reached by his writings and the story of his life. That abiding influence can perhaps best be illustrated by the story of a Young People's Conference in Glasgow a few years ago. A girl who had but recently become a member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church heard speaker after speaker refer to Mr. Struthers and* The Morning Watch, *using his words to give point and vividness to the subject under discussion, until the whole atmosphere of the meeting was vibrant with his spirit. Suddenly the girl, deeply moved, turned to the lady who sat beside her and whispered, "Is Mr. Struthers here? I think I should like to meet him."*

The purpose of this Struthers Centenary issue is to do something to enable our readers to meet Mr. Struthers; if we can make him live for any of them, our centenary tribute will not have been in vain.

The article by Dr. W. H. Hamilton, until a few years ago General Secretary of the Presbyterian Alliance, is reprinted in slightly abbreviated form from the Presbyterian Register *of May,* 1940; *and that by Professor J. L. Morison from an earlier isue of the* R.P. Witness (*February,* 1944): *it is felt that such fine tributes are worthy of something more permanent than a fugitive publication in the separate issues where they first appeared, and they are therefore brought together here.*

It has been thought fitting that this whole issue should, as far as possible, be about or by Mr. Struthers, and so the usual Questions in the Young People's Pages have been omitted this month, so that that section of the magazine might be given up to one of the lovely stories from The Morning Watch; *the one chosen is from one of the early numbers, and may not be familiar to many of our readers.*

Its illustration of that Divine planning which we call coincidence, of human kindliness and of the transforming power of the gospel make it typical of most of Mr. Struthers' stories.

J. P. Struthers by his Friends *is gleaned from the Memorial Volume of* The Morning Watch; *and* J. P. Struthers and Current Events *applies his timeless comments to events of today.*

But, as the late Rev. A. C. Gregg has written, "if anyone wants really to know the life of Mr. Struthers the best place to get the knowledge is in the pages of the twenty-seven volumes of the little magazine which he wrote out of his very heart and soul." So long as even a few volumes can still be picked up in the second-hand bookshops, so long will John Paterson Struthers live in the hearts of those who never knew him in the flesh, but who thank God upon every remembrance of him.

J. P. STRUTHERS

By Rev. W. H. HAMILTON, D.D.

There is a genuine literary classic in the less accessible literature of Scotland which those who are fortunate enough to possess it place between HANS ANDERSEN and JOHN BUNYAN on their bookshelves. This is the twenty-seven tiny annual volumes of *The Morning Watch*, a small periodical "for the young," written and published (originally at the request of the Reformed Presbyterian, or Cameronian, Church in Scotland) by the Rev. JOHN PATERSON STRUTHERS (1851-1915), a minister of that "Covenanters'" church, from 1888 till his death on 17th January, 1915.

The Morning Watch is as worthy of fame as JOSEPH ADDISON'S *Spectator*, and its author was as remarkable a man and no less a genius. As a youth he was capable of declining a chair of Greek in Australia with a salary of £600 a year in order to devote his life to ministry in one of the least affluent of churches at £80. In later life he declined offers of jealously guarded honorary degrees from Scottish universities. And, although a very loyal patriot, his characteristic sense of proportion and fitness appeared when he made no pulpit reference in 1897 to Queen VICTORIA'S Diamond Jubilee on the Sunday of Commemora-

tion, but chose for his text on that occasion " And He shall reign for ever and ever." There may thus be seen something of the austere splendour of poetry and devotion that inhabited his heart. But indeed he has become something of a legend in the Scottish churches and there are innumerable stories told of his doughty character, his penetrating wisdom, his witty and affectionate comments on the life and labour and sports of ordinary men, his remarkably original exposition of the whole Bible (chapter by chapter) to his congregation, his immense book-learning, his pungent Calvinism, his delicate and often poignant human touch in anecdote, verse and tale, his great evangelical and missionary passion (for by some miracle of thrift he provided for more than one missionary abroad from his own pocket), and his quaint lore in innumerable byways of literature and information. He ought to have had a BOSWELL, and the *Life and Letters* edited by Mrs. STRUTHERS (who died in 1929) is well worth careful perusal, although, like the treasured *Morning Watch*, it is now very hard to procure.

These praises of the tiny periodical may sound extravagant and amazing to any who have not examined it; but the rest will know that a tithe has not been told of its sheer grace and goodness. Its sturdy Puritan background does not detract from, but rather adds to, its grace and beauty. A series of illustrated satires, " Reasons for not going to church," might have done credit to a great humorous journal—so severe, so kindly, so witty, so reproving (all at the same time) as they are. Thus—

" This man attends all the ploughing matches in the county, but he didn't go to church last Sabbath—a ten minutes' walk—' because the roads were so muddy.' "

" This man was curling strenuously from half-past nine on Monday morning till half-past nine on Monday evening, but he did not go to church on Sabbath because he suffers from cold feet and has a most commanding pain at times in his back, and his wife, who has been poorly ever since last harvest, frets when she is left alone. The old man in a jersey standing beside him doesn't go either, his excuse being that ' he hasn't got an overcoat.' "

A monthly page collocating Bible texts in a wonderfully unexpected and poetic arrangement is another unique feature to which justice hardly can be done by one or two brief samples—but here is a set for a homily on " Fine Faces." :

" ' Thou hast doves' eyes ' (Cant. i. 15, iv. 1) ; ' A wise man's mouth ' (Eccles. x. 12) ; ' Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep which come up from the washing ' (Cant. iv. 2) ; ' Having His Father's name written in their foreheads ' (Rev. xiv. 1) ; ' His face as it had been the face of an angel ' (Acts vi. 15)."

And here is a set on " Comradeship "—

" ' While they communed, Jesus drew near and went with them ' (Luke xxiv. 15) ; ' Abraham My Friend ' (Isa. xli. 8) ; ' He shall gather the lambs in His arms ' (Isa. xl. 11) ; ' I am a companion of all them that fear Thee' (Ps. cxix. 63) ; ' Jonathan said unto David, Come, let us go out into the field ' (I Sam. xx. 11) ; ' What did God give you a crook in your arm for? Why surely to hook it into some other fellow's ' (Bishop Mandell Creighton) ; ' A companion of fools shall be destroyed ' (Prov. xiii. 20) ; ' I have eaten my morsel myself alone ' (Job xxxi. 17)."

Little chapters of biography, always with some nimble-witted comment or singular application, are frequent—a random glance shows me SOCRATES, POLYCARP, ALEXANDER THE GREAT, WILLIAM SAUTRE of Norfolk, WILLIAM TYNDALE, HUGH LATIMER, COLUMBUS, CAROLINE HERSCHEL, EMILY BRONTE, and scores of others. But the chiefest glory, perhaps, of the paper is the uncounted little stories invented by this little-suspected and narrowly-famed " poet." Each has a moral, or many, implicit in it—severe and pathetic and kindly and humorous in one. Not, after all, so like HANS ANDERSEN as like a " MARK RUTHERFORD " with a charmed audience of girls and boys around him listening to his noble prose and profound message.

Mr. STRUTHERS's work was done for the most part in the town of Greenock. JOHN GALT the novelist, JOHN DAVIDSON the poet and JOHN STRUTHERS the preacher, editor and tender moralist, are three great literary Greenockians, and I should be prepared to argue that the greatest of these is STRUTHERS. Like JOHN MILTON and JOHN BUNYAN, he demonstrates that puritanism is no sour-visaged spirit, but an angel of light and loveliness and compassion when seen aright, and as full of humour as of solemnity. Selections from his writings have been rescued and issued by Messrs. J. Clarke & Co.; but there ought, I am sure, to be a permanent volume of his little stories in some series of classics as " Everyman's Library " or the Oxford Editions.

The Daffodil

When Mother sets the tablecloth,
  With all her pretty ware,
The children know she plights her troth—
  There's Dinner in the air.

So all our fears our Father stills
  In Springtime's chilly morn,
The God who sends us Daffodils
  Will not forget the Corn.

—*The Morning Watch*, April, 1906.

OLD GLASGOW WORTHIES—J. P. STRUTHERS

By Professor J. L. MORISON.

I still remember the first glimpse I ever had of a man of genius. It was a pleasant afternoon in Glenpark, Greenock cricket ground, the players were at practice before the match, and a grave, elderly minister was fielding stray balls, returning them with an action which we lads called " hinching."

We all knew J. P. Struthers, the minister of the local Reformed Presbyterian Church. Glasgow was his birthplace, Upper Lanarkshire the home of his folk, who traced back their descent 200 years to the Covenanters without a fool or scamp in their line. He had been dux in the High School and a distinguished student in the University, refusing not long after graduation the offer of a colonial chair of Greek, and choosing rather to serve as minister the Church of his fathers. He had been drawn from fruitful work in South-West Scotland to the charge in Greenock, where for 33 years he ministered to one of the most remarkable congregations in the country, resisting the many efforts which his admirers made to lure him to " larger spheres of influence " elsewhere. In these years he established a unique reputation, and, dying in 1915, bequeathed to Greenock a wealth of faithful service and memories of a very great personality. In his lifetime we all counted him the foremost citizen of the town.

UNOBTRUSIVE EXTERIOR

He challenged all stereotyped notions of genius, even in his sober, unobtrusive, spectacled exterior—strangers would have written him down as over-serious if they had missed the gleam of humour shining through his spectacles, or the note of originality and conviction in his speech. It was not that he had contributed to literature or theological scholarship, apart from an astonishing little magazine for children, " The Morning Watch," which that infallible critic, James Denney, included in his list of the hundred best religious books. Nor, on shallow standards, was he a polished pulpit orator.

His peculiar genius lay in this, that his personality was so completely fused, its moral power, its intellectual distinction, and even its physical qualities so unified that he was never other than himself. It mattered not whether he was distributing cinnamon balls to women at their washtubs in a Greenock hospital or guiding some poor drunk home or expounding Scripture to his congregation, Struthers always conveyed the impression of being something unique

and great. Besides this he clung to the region of common fundamental things and plain people. Like Abraham Lincoln, he drew strength from his union with simple folk.

He was, in his day, by far the most impressive expositor of Scripture then living, and we forgot time and everything else but the speaker and his theme as Struthers revivified stories from the Pentateuch or Judges, drawing his illustrations from a vast experience of men and books. He made the Bible not only our guide to redemption, but the most fascinating textbook of history in the world. Gravity and reverence never obscured what he would call the humour of the Bible, for he had a Shakespearean sense of the incongruities of life, including religion, and could not refrain from whimsical imaginations—as when, dealing with Balaam, he remarked, "One of the cleverest of men. . . . Israel needed a poet, but yet he is less famous than his ass."

LIFE'S IRONIES

It was just in this appreciation, in act as well as word, of life's ironies or kindly absurdities that his genius found its happiest moments and won our affection and devotion. He was as unexpected and seemingly self-contradictory as life itself, warning sinners of their sins, and leaving rosebuds on his garden wall for chance passers-by; fielding cricket balls in Glenpark, and challenging his Maker at some sad funeral service "to justify Thy dealings with this family": self-suppressing almost to extravagance, and relentlessly confessing public sins in the presence of public sinners.

He was most surely judged by the poor and distressed whom he served. "Are you not afraid?" said an old man, dying of typhus, as Struthers stood by his bedside. Then he added—and it might have served for a hero's epitaph—"It's a poor soldier who won't follow his Captain."

By kind permission of Professor Morison and the "Glasgow Herald."

"It is odd Peter should have spoken about courtesy—the man who spoke so rudely to the maid-servant who said she had seen him with Christ."

—*Life and Letters, p.* 157.

"Moses was the first to call God 'My God.' Those who went before seem to have been afraid to go so near—even Abraham."

—*Life and Letters, p.* 188.

Young People's Pages

JEANIE CALLANDER

By Rev. J. P. STRUTHERS, M.A.

CHAPTER I.

" It's Jeanie Callander this, and Jeanie Callander that; who is this Jeanie Callander?" That is what visitors used to say when they had been staying with any of the families in the village for a day or two. But if they stayed a month, or even a fortnight, they talked about her as much as we did, and when they went away, one of the last things they did was to tell Jeanie they would be glad if she would spend her holidays with them. It would not be easy to tell exactly what it was that made everybody love her. But everybody did love her, from the little children at school almost as old as herself, who asked her to tell them how to lift the stitches they had dropped in their knitting, to the old woman ten times her age whose errands she was always willing to run. It was Jeanie, Tom Drew the carter told me, that kept him from becoming a drunkard. He was going into the public-house for the third time one day when Jeanie came up and said : " Mr. Drew, your Maggie is dux today, and is wearying for night for you to see her with the medal round her neck." (There was a medal with a blue ribbon in our school—it never occurred to us in those days to ask what it was made of, it was a medal and that was enough—which the dux carried home at night.) " Maggie is going to be a great scholar." Tom stood a minute and then turned. He never entered a public-house again.

It was the same wherever Jeanie went. If she came into a railway carriage people who had been sitting gloomy and silent instantly brightened up and talked.

But it is one day I wish to speak of, a day in April long ago. She and the other girls had done their sums in the play-ground before starting for home. The rest of their lessons were unusually easy that night. On her way a thought suddenly came into her mind. Her uncle from Glasgow was returning next day. He had been telling them one night about the dreadful High Street and the Infirmary, and the pale, sad faces he saw at the windows every time he passed to and from his work. There were no " flower missions " in those days, but it occurred to Jeanie that a basketful of primroses, of which the woods were then full, might please the patients. So home she ran and getting her own and their mothers' consent went

out with two of her companions, Annie Macfie and Barbara Gow. They were home by seven and then made up a hundred and one little nosegays. Next morning these were handed in to the porter with a line written by Jeanie's uncle—" From Jeanie Callander, with her love."

CHAPTER II

Susie Mason was very ill. She came from a miserable home in Meuse Lane. Six weeks before, a snowdrop had somehow found its way into the ward. It was put in a cup. Every patient got keeping it half-an-hour as long as it lasted. Poor snowdrop! " You're dying too," Susie had said to it, and then one day it disappeared and the ward was duller. Susie had only had one other experience in connection with flowers, and it too had saddened her. She had once seen " the handsomest woman in Glasgow " step out of her carriage in the Cowcaddens, with a bouquet of roses in her hand. It was like a vision of heaven, and poor Susie, then only seven, had said before she knew it—" Oh-h-h, you might give me one!" but though " the handsomest woman " only glanced at her for the fraction of a moment, there was so much contempt in the glance that Susie blushed years after whenever she thought of it. And the lady, I am glad, blushed too.

The primroses made a wonderful sensation, and they seemed to know it! For they looked brighter the second day than they did the first. It looked as if the sun were shining on every bed and every window sill in the room. Susie was specially glad. Nurse Ramsay had given her the little slip of paper—' From Jeanie Callander, with her love.' Who this could be, no one could tell her. The patients thought from the way the nosegays were made up that she must be a great lady. Susie thought no, but said only this—" If ever you see her, nurse, will you thank her for me?" A day or two before she died, when the nurse read to her the passage that says ' the city was pure gold,' poor Susie said, " Maybe it will be like the place where the primroses grew."

CHAPTER III.

Jeanie Callander, strange to say, had forgotten what her uncle had said about the Infirmary till she herself had lain in it nine weeks. Her sufferings had been very great. The operation for which she had been brought there had been successful beyond expectation, and her recovery was now only a question of time. One day as she talked with the nurse she asked her to tell her about all the people who had lain in that bed, and the nurse, only too glad to oblige one who had been the cheeriest and most grateful patient

she had ever seen, promised to look up her diary—she was, fortunately, a most orderly woman—and tell her all she could. As she went through the list, she came to the name, "Susie Mason," and almost before she knew it, she had read out the words—"Desired me, if ever I met her, to thank Jeanie Callander for primroses." Then, in one instant, everything came back into the memory of both, and as they talked their eyes filled with tears.

That night at worship Nurse Ramsay gave out the 41st Psalm:

Blessed is he that wisely doth
The poor man's case consider;
For when the time of trouble is,
The Lord will him deliver.

God will give strength when he on bed
Of languishing doth mourn;
And in his sickness sore, O Lord,
Thou all his bed wilt turn.

The forenoon Jeanie left for home old Mrs. Gibson, whose bed was next to hers, who had been a different woman ever since Jeanie came, said, "Good-bye, Jeanie, I'll see Susie today, and I'll tell her."

And before Jeanie was well past the Barony Church, as she went down the High Street waving her handkerchief from the cab to the patients who filled the windows, Mrs. Gibson had begun to fulfil her promise.

—*The Morning Watch*, 1894, *pp. 42 ff.*

(In a letter written on February 16, 1894, *to the lady who became his wife Mr. Struthers wrote, "I was in a house on Friday and found people reading a volume of the* U.P. Missionary Half-Penny Magazine, *forty-four years old. I used to read it long ago, and loved it dearly. I wonder if anybody will read ours forty-four years after this. I hope so. We don't know whom we are writing for, or drawing for; so we must do our best." That that best was worthy of remembrance is evidenced by the fact that we are reading Jeanie Callander's story fifty-seven years after it was written in* 1894.)

Snowdrops

Ye Samuels, that get your little coats
And snow-white ephods once a year,
And are the first awake to hear
The call of God!

—*The Morning Watch*, February, 1901.

J. P. STRUTHERS BY HIS FRIENDS

" When his theological course was finished, he did not immediately apply for licence to preach the Gospel. People wondered at the somewhat lengthened delay. In my impatience I approached his mother on the subject, and one day when I was in her house (for she was very kind to me) and no one else was present, I asked why John was not sending in his name to the Presbytery. After a short pause as if she were not sure whether she should say it or not, she whispered in my ear, '*He's waiting for the Call.*' Great and sacred words! A touch of the divine in them! *O si sic omnes*! In due time he did send in his name, which meant that the ' Call ' had come, at what hour, in what way we know not, but this we know, that it ushered into the Gospel ministry a man girt with the golden girdle of a tremendous assurance; that it summoned to the field a soldier who had ' put on the whole armour of God.' "

—Rev. P. CARMICHAEL, B.D.

" He was extraordinarily tender, and unselfish and generous, and hopeful for other people, even the most disappointing and feckless. What a real pleasure he had in praising his friends, crowning them with the garlands he would never accept for himself! How much he gave away, of his money, his time, his thought and labour, his heart's love! What an ungrudging service it was his habit to render to the unfortunate, and those who had fallen, and those who tired out the patience of almost everybody else! And you never heard a word about it from his own lips. In truth, he dealt most unsparingly with himself . . . Our Moses of the Mount would not allow that his face shone.

" God was First and Last with him. He was a great preacher, partly because of his remarkable originality, which never forsook him, but still more because he had an unconcealed and unending gladness in proclaiming the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

" But it is useless trying to delineate him. I, at least, cannot do justice to one of the noblest and most Christlike men I have known."

—Rev. ALEXANDER SMELLIE, D.D.

" I have never known a man in whom self-denial was so perfected. He never thought of himself if there were others to think of, and he never counted any time wasted that was spent in doing good. The good that he did, too, was not the good that attracted him; it was just the good that was there, waiting and needing to be done. No drudgery it involved was too trivial or too thankless; he went through it with fidelity as scrupulous as if it had been the most honourable work in the world.

" But through all his genius and goodness I believe most people would have been struck by his extraordinary love for the Bible. It came out even in his manner of reading it. Some men read the Bible as if they had written it, or as if it had been written only for others to whom they were announcing it, but Mr. Struthers read like a man listening for a voice which he knew and would recognise, and not only listening for that voice but continually hearing it, with a solemn awe and gladness which communicated itself to all who heard him . . . He caught the voice of the Father, and was glad, in what to others seemed dreary and uninteresting passages."

—Professor JAMES DENNEY, D.D.

" The need of the heathen world ever wrought on his compassion. I never knew any man whose heart so burned with zeal for the missionary cause. He thought the missionary of Christ to be in the most honourable post which a human being could occupy. He revered the true missionary. He would have done anything in his power to encourage him or help him. And all services ancillary to mission were in Mr. Struthers' view tinged with a glow from heaven. To build a mission ship; to be a carpenter at a mission station; to write an article about a missionary; above all, to translate even one verse like John iii. 16 into any heathen tongue in which the Gospel had never before been spoken—these were actions which he thought angels might well covet to perform. Nor was the missionary enterprise with him a mere matter for burning speech or enthusiastic admiration. He never invited anyone to do a duty which he had not begun to perform himself. His liberality towards foreign missions and Bible societies was exceeding abundant and constant at that. He would economise in every other direction, but never in the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."

—Rev. A. C. GREGG, B.D.

"In exponding the Word, and in declaring the love of God for men, there was none like to him in all broad Scotland, nor is there any like to him left. These, I think, were the two outstanding peaks in the mountain range of his preaching, which for thirty odd years stormed the skies in Greenock. I question if in many generations there has been so unique an interpreter of the Bible. He brought to it a careful, exact scholarship, but other men have done that: he brought also a living zeal for the Gospel and the Kingdom, but so have other men; but he brought also an imagination, which circled in a wide orbit round the poles of humour and austerity, and this was his unique gift. Consequently, the Bible became in his hands a living thing, like Moses' rod. It became a serpent to sting the conscience and arouse the soul."

—Rev. THOMAS CASSELS,
in *Men of the Knotted Heart.*

The Snowdrop

When Bridegroom-like forth came the Sun
To wed the opening year,
Of Trees, and Shrubs, and Flowers, which one
Did first full-robed appear?

'Twas not the strong-limbed giant Oak,
Nor blossomed Apple-tree,
That homage paid and welcome spoke
For Earth's nobility.

But if no bough in mead or wood
Brought any offering,
Was there no scented Flower that could
Her pot of incense swing?

No perfumed Violet awake
In crevice of the rocks?
No Lily that for Him would break
Her alabaster box?

Oak, Lily, Violet, Apple-tree—
They slumbered all and slept;
Alone the Snowdrop patiently
Her loving vigil kept.

And when the cry, "He comes!" was heard,
And in the silent camp
No voice replied, no speaker stirred,
She trimmed her prudent lamp,

And sallied forth, she that was least,
And met Him on the road,
First entrant at the Marriage Feast,
First of the Guests of God!

J. P. STRUTHERS AND CURRENT EVENTS

The Census

" I talked about the man with the ink-horn in Ezekiel—about the census, in fact. I asked the people to fill it in just before or after family worship. It is a solemn time. Ten years are a big bit of life . . . Christ was numbered at Bethlehem."

—from a letter dated April 4, 1891.

" And another book was opened, which is the book of life."

—Rev. 20. 12.

The filling up of the census paper will be done in most houses, I imagine, on the Sabbath day, and if it is rightly gone about, say immediately before or after family worship, it is work worthy of the Sabbath. Very few heads of houses fill up two census lists the same way. As they compare 1891 with 1901, they are compelled to say like Jacob, " O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant ; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands." Others, again, can only think of those that are gone. " Joseph is not, and Simeon is not." " And there I buried Leah." Yet of the dead they can also say by faith, " Joseph is yet alive."

Even when the names are still the same after the ten years' interval has passed, there are other changes to be recorded. Those that were infants of days then are now scholars, those that were scholars are now apprentices, or tradesmen with an honourable calling. When your father shows you your name on the paper, you should say, Where shall I be in 1911? and what shall I be? If you commit your way to God, whatever may happen before that time comes, all shall be well. Living or dying, you will be the Lord's.

There is one of the columns in the census paper which you should look at very reverently and very humbly. It is that which is set apart for those that are lunatic, or imbecile, or blind, or deaf-and-dumb. We should be filled with great thankfulness to God if there are none such in our homes. God's thoughts have been precious unto us. How great is the sum of them. If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand. And we should be filled

with great compassion for those who, as they look at some who are dear to them, can only say, Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight. Many a father and mother will write the word " imbecile " opposite some loved name with a sore heart. Yet the story of what God did for imbeciles and lunatics, and of what they did for Him, will not be the least of the surprises that shall await us at the last day when the Lion of the tribe of Judah opens the sealed books of God.

—*The Morning Watch*, 1901, *pp.* 38 *f.*

Some will look on the Census Sheet, when they fill it up with names and dates and facts, as a thing of form. Some will treat it as a jest. Some will write on it with pain, and some with shame, and some with rage; some with joy, and some with hope, and some with great fear and awe.

If we think of it as we ought, it is work most fit for the Lord's Day, for it calls on us to think of all God did for us before time was, and since, and of all that He will do for us when time shall be no more.

When the Sheet is brought out to be filled, it is a good plan for all the house to meet, and pray, and sing words like those in Psalm 115, 12-18:

The Lord of us hath mindful been,
And He will bless us still;
He will the house of Israel bless,
Bless Aaron's house He will.

And when we are alone, let us ask ourselves such things as these: For what was I sent into the Kingdom at such a time as this? When next Census Day comes round, where shall I be? what shall I be? And when the whole world's roll is called at the Last Day, and the Lord shall count, and write up the people, is my name to be found written in the Lamb's Book of Life, or—*blotted out of it*?

—*The Morning Watch*, 1911, *p.* 38.

A Critical Time

" Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this."—Eccl. 7. 10.

It was a Sabbath morning in April, and the two men, Mr. Williams and Mr. Andrewson, were speaking to one

another across the 4-foot wall that separated their gardens. Breakfast and family worship in both their houses were past, and the two men were waiting till their wives and children were ready for church. It was a little after nine, but they had four miles to go.

Mr. Williams was a grumbling, discontented man, who thought he had nothing to learn from anybody, so he daily grew in conceit and ignorance.

" I suppose there never was a more anxious month than this in the country's history," he said.

" It is a solemn time," said Mr. Andrewson.

" I don't suppose there has been a time like it."

" A very solemn time, indeed."

" The most critical time our country ever saw," said Mr. Williams.

" A critical time, no doubt," said Mr. Andrewson, " and we do well to pray."

" In fact," said Mr. Williams, " I believe it is unquestionable that there has never been a month like it in either ancient or modern times in the whole world's history. That's what all the newspapers say, and what every intelligent man that I have met says. There never has been a time like it in the experience of any people or nation."

" Are you remembering the 24th of August, 1572, in France?" said Mr. Andrewson.

" No, I can't say I do. What happened then?"

" That was the day of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. And do you know what happened on the 1st of May, 1545, in Spain? or in Russia on the 2nd of April, 1512? or in Peru in 1544? or in Guatemala in 1524? or in Afghanistan in 1725? or in Thibet in 1318? Do you know a single thing that happened in any part of Asia from the year 550 to the year 1100? or a single thing that happened in China for 2000 years before the Christian era, or 1000 years after?"

" Do you know yourself what happened on these dates in all these countries?" said Mr. Williams.

" Not in the very least," said Mr. Andrewson, " but until I know a little more of the world's history than I do I should hardly think myself justified in using such expressions as you do—' never in the history of any people,' and all that kind of talk."

" I'm only a plain man that knows his Bible, and is content with that."

" Well, then, do you know what happened B.C. 2348? or B.C. 538."

" No."

" Well, the one was the year of the Flood, and the other the date of the Fall of Babylon. But you'll know, of course, what happened A.D. 70? No? It was then that Jerusalem was taken by the Romans, and at that time, our Lord says, ' there should be tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.' "

" Then I understand you to say," said Mr. Williams, " that this has not been a critical month in Britain's history?"

" Oh, no! I only said we should both know a little more before we said it was *the most critical* time in the history of the world either in ancient or modern times. Don't you see? I might say your cabbage plants are looking very well, but that's a different thing from saying there never were cabbages like them since the world was created."

" Nobody was speaking about cabbages," said Mr. Williams.

" Quite true," said Mr. Andrewson. " I was only— " But then he suddenly remembered the text—Prov. 27. 22, " Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him "—and wisely said no more!

—*The Morning Watch*, 1914, *pp* 58 *ff.*

" ' Have fervent charity.' We really ought to *love* people. It's the most positive command in the Bible. It's the very essence of God's nature."

—*Life and Letters, p.* 158.

" I like talking about coincidences, because it gives one a chance of talking of God's love."

—*Life and Letters, p.* 314.

" I do agree with you that those who are brought up in God's fear are brought to it imperceptibly. At any rate, I would rather trust a constant crying after Him than any past sensation. Our best way is to throw ourselves afresh on Him."

—*Life and Letters, p.* 139.